

# “Jirai Kei” and the History of Girly Kei Fashion Stereotypes

If you're in the j-fashion community, odds are by now you've heard of jirai-kei. But what you might not know is that “jirai kei” isn't actually a fashion at all! On the other hand, girly kei fashion is an alternative j-fashion type - and yet you never hear about it in the west. I'd like to talk about some misinfo and stereotypes that seem to cling to girly kei fashion throughout its long existence. Please note that the links go to archived versions of the sites, so the links won't look pretty but they are valid addresses. I add additional info as the spread of the stereotype develops, as well as recent articles on the subject in Japan.

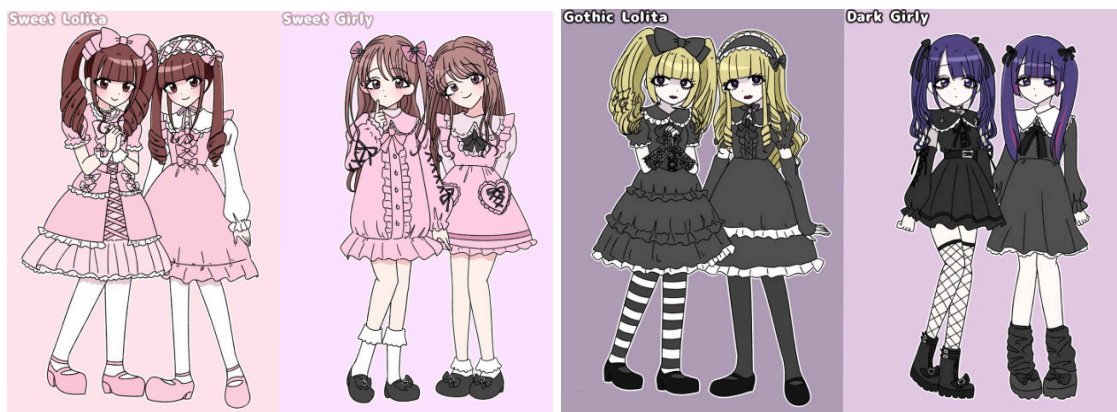
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## “Kei means fashion, right?”

The western j-fashion community, for years, has been under the false impression that “kei” (系) translates to “fashion” and therefore denotes the name of an alternative fashion style. But kei actually means “type”. Alone, it's used for Pokemon, the solar system, and to say that somebody is “one of *those* types”. When used in that way, it's almost always referring to a stereotype, most often negative. For example, the Japanese equivalent of the r-word and n-word both contain “kei”. Looking up “フェアリー 系” (fairy kei) would get you fairy pokemon, and “フェアリー 系男の子” (fairy kei boy) gets the “fairy boy” archetype, where a boy is cute and charming, but manipulative and rotten inside. To get fairy kei as the west knows it, you'd need to search “フェアリー 系ファッション” (fairy kei fashion).

## “So what's girly kei then?”

Girly kei fashion, written “ガーリー系ファッション”, is a long-established Japanese alternative fashion group, known for its ribbons, frills, lace, and bijou details. It's often considered a casual alternative to lolita, although it's become even more popular with non-lolitas. There's a large range of substyles, much like in gyaru. The more common ones range from darker, more gothic looks, to lighter and sweeter outfits, to more mature and modest options. It's important to note that much like fairy kei, the name isn't literal - it's an instance of a phenomenon known as “wasei-eigo”. Not all “girly” fashion is girly kei, much like how fairy kei has more to do with 80s aesthetic than fairy wings.



- [ガーリースタイル \\*](#)
- [ガーリー系ファッションのブランド&セレクトショップ一覧](#)
- [ガーリーファッションとは？ 特徴やブランド&コーデ\(イラスト付き\)](#)
- [20代・30代のオススメ♡ガーリー系ブランド](#)
- [ソウルジェム&カップモチーフがかわいい！ ガーリー系ブランド『LIZ LISA』の『魔法少女まどか☆マギカ』コラボが甘々](#)
- [100% Girly♡ Romantic & Girly Brands《Roundup》 | Lafary\(ラファリー\)](#)
- [Kawaii Tutorial #79 - Girly Prop Styling With Ayumi Endo](#)
- [OSAKA STREET SNAP 261 白襟と白タイツがロリータちっくなモノトーンガーリーコーデ](#)
- [OSAKA STREET SNAP 265 ピンクと黒を8:2の割合でコーデしたガーリースタイル](#)

(\* note: while girly-style.net has pages on jirai, ryouasangata, and other stereotypes mentioned later in this document, they are listed under the "personality types" category, which suggests brands based on stereotypical traits - for example, "bitch kei" features brands also selling skimpy clothing. Currently, its servers are blocking non-Japanese IPs, and it's unknown if this will ever change again)

## “Isn’t some of that just jirai kei?”

One of the most recent stereotypes associated with girly kei wearers to go mainstream, and the first to make it this big in the west, is known as “地雷系”. The term translates to “landmine-type”, but of course that’s not the literal meaning as “landmine” is also the Japanese slang term for “trigger”, and being triggered is written as “地雷を踏んだ”, meaning “I stepped on a landmine”. In reference to a person, a “landmine” is someone that’s so easily triggered over minor things that they keep exploding on others with abusive behavior, so you need to be as careful as if you were walking around a minefield. This meaning has been around for about a decade, primarily used in dating advice articles about how to recognise “red flags” in a potential partner and how to prevent developing them yourself. However, fueled by the landmine stereotype, even the most arbitrary traits are considered red flags and wearing dark alternative fashion is already enough to have someone considered a potential landmine.

- [男子が警戒する「地雷女子」の特徴とは？](#)
- [＜実録！不倫カップルの顛末＞シングルマザーの受難...地雷女が起こした修羅場とは](#)
- [「地雷女」とは？ 特徴8つ & 地雷女にならないポイント](#)
- [Jirai Kareshi \(My Boyfriend's a Ticking Time Bomb\) | Manga - MyAnimeList.net](#)

Even now, the public image of jirai kei is still extremely negative. Below are few examples of Japanese Twitter users sharing their opinions on landmine girls, leaving remarks about how they overly edit their selfies to the degree they become unrecognizable, proudly post photos of their latest acts of self-harm to social media, as well as how they keep renting Sanrio hotel rooms for group cutting sessions and suicides.

- [♡にゃん首領♡ on Twitter: "こんな風に地雷メイクを履き違えてデーモン閣"](#)
- [樫\(ゆずりは\) on Twitter: "←ネットで会う約束した人 実際来た人→..."](#)
- [仁礼瑞穂@ゆかり王国観光協会\(バスツアー\) on Twitter: "なんか地雷系の人がいっぱい入居して、流血沙汰とか自殺未遂が普通の部屋より多く発生しそう\(小並感\)..."](#)
- [🐟 関西スカウト きりみくん🐟 on Twitter: "最近、いかにもMCM背負ってフリフリのピンク"](#)
- [あん@ぽっちゃり絵👉skeb募集中 on Twitter: "モンスターエナジー"](#)



“If it’s not a fashion substyle, why are so many of those memes showing the same fashion?”

Alright, this is where girly kei comes in. Up until around 2020, jirai kei didn’t have any associations with any particular fashions or interests. But that changed when a popular Japanese makeup guru started a “psycho girlfriend” dress-up challenge and called the final look a landmine-type cosplay. She asserted that the landmine-types were often fans of dark girly fashion.

- [絶対最強デカ目になれる!!地雷女メイク解説します ⚡ 鬼タレ目な量産型ヲタク、黒髪で病..](#)

This has been far from the only time makeup channels do offensive dress-up memes to imitate groups of people - tutorials on how to emulate black girls, chinese girls, and mixed-japanese girls have also been popular despite all being discriminated against in Japan.

- [【ほぼプチプラ】冬の垢抜ける毎日メイクを皆様にご紹介します 🧑‍🎨](#)
- [【B-Girl MAKE】Bガールメイクで黒肌強め女子に変身してみた♪](#)
- [チャイナメイクで別人になった.....](#)

When the video went viral in March, with everyone inside due to the COVID lockdown, every influencer was getting in on the trend, and cosplaying as a landmine-type psycho girlfriend, generally also tagging with “yandere”. With the term coming up left and right, various brands started to market their collections as clothing for said dress-up challenge. Naturally, due to more people wanting to participate in the trend, these collections did extremely well. On top of that, jirai kei became a buzzword due to its sudden increased use and controversial nature. This again resulted in more reach for brands that listed their clothing as being for landmine-types, and gave rise to a whole new issue.

## “Jirai isn’t a meme, girls on SNS call themselves landmines!”

No matter how controversial a term is, as long as it’s going viral it will be used for marketing purposes in order to generate a higher profit by taking advantage of the increased reach it provides. Therefore many influencers and brands will keep hopping onto the latest buzzwords in order to stay relevant despite their content barely changing at all (most popularly Lafary.net).

However, there’s also girls who call themselves landmine genuinely as they identify with the stereotype and its negative aspects. It’s a common misconception in the west that Japanese girls are reclaiming the term, meaning turning it into something positive. But generally speaking, the concept of “reclaiming” terms does not exist in Japan the way it might elsewhere - it’s not present in its culture. As a matter of fact, the reverse is common. For example, gyaru (ギャル), a fashion subculture about subverting Japanese beauty standards, is also used as an insult by normies and non-gyaru for anyone they perceive to be a “bimbo”. The closest thing Japan does to reclaiming slurs is deriving positive terms from negative ones, like how otaku became wotaku in order to remove the social stigma towards anime fans. Be wary of self-proclaimed “Japanese” preaching about reclamation, usually that’s people lying in order to “prove” their point, and even within Japan, the average person doesn’t know everything about their country, so why should you trust some english-speaking rando on the internet about its cultural norms without providing any actual sources?

## “Well what about Menhera?”

Menhera is an example of positive terms turned into insults, not reclamation. Menhera as a subculture has been around since the early 00s, was born on a mental health board, and is centered around mental health awareness. The biggest part of the subculture is the making and sharing of vent art. The fashion elements of menhera include the vent art on printed shirts and dresses to express inner struggles, and to draw attention to mental health. But because of the enormous social stigma around mental health issues in Japan, outsiders began misusing it interchangeably to mean “psycho” and “yandere”. This has gotten so out of hand that even psychiatrists are writing online begging people to stop misusing the term, as it is contributing to those with mental health struggles who formerly had an online community to go to being unable to do so from the misuse. I recommend Menheratic as a website to research the meaning and evolution of menhera as a subculture and as a word. I’ve also made a post that goes into more detail about exactly how menhera has been derailed and why it matters (hint: the mainstream misuse can be traced back to a specific highly publicized murder case).

- [Menhera as Art and Subculture](#)
- [Positivity spreading via "Menhera"](#)
- [メンヘラさんの癒しになるメンヘラグッズ!? ヴィレヴァンでの”メンヘラ”グッズの勢い止まらず！](#)
- [「メンヘラ」という言葉はどう変化してきたか。精神科医が解説](#)
- [メンヘラファッションが心の健康について話すきっかけに](#)
- [A Message From the Menhera Community — Puvithel](#)
- [監視は怠らない...メンヘラ女子集合！指原&プラマヨの恋するサイテー男総選挙#134](#)

(note: girly kei is mentioned as well, at around 27 minutes when the girls show off their coords.)

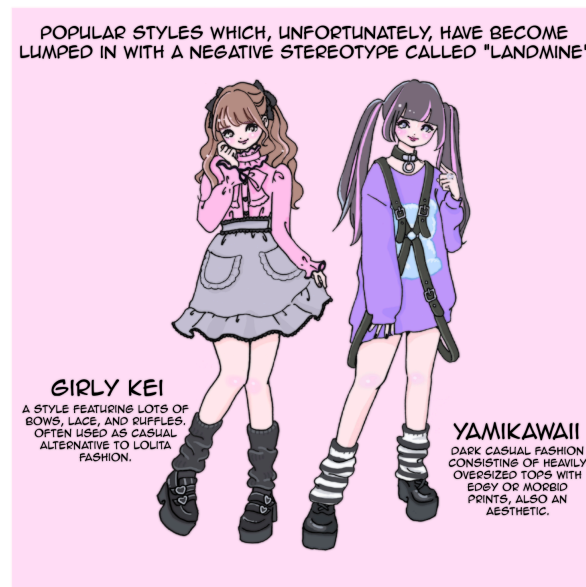
## “But the social media tag-”

The hashtags don’t even exclusively contain “pink x black” girly kei fashion, which the west asserts is named “jirai kei”. It’s just as common to see yamikawaii bear outfits, general alternative fashion, and as



per the most recent landmine trends, kawaii-ified tracksuits that sabukaru (サブカル) aka subcultural hipsters were into about a year or two ago, as well as people showing off stolen Donpen shirts to prove how unhinged they are. On Twitter, it is even more common to find pictures of customized self-harm tools, freshly cut wrists, and people collecting their own blood in cute containers - more so by Chinese landmine girls who are a lot more radicalized when it comes to the self-harm aspect of the stereotype to the degree the jirai kei tag has been shadowbanned on their own local social media over how common it was to find gore and teen-CSEM in the results.

- [インスタで地雷女子に人気！今ブームのドンペンTシャツって？ - HARAJUKU POP WEB](#)



## “Where did this stereotype come from?”

There's this gang known as the Toyoko Kids (ト一横キッズ) who've been occupying Kabukicho for years, and many of the members have been wearing various dark j-fashion styles long before the jirai kei dress-up challenge came to be. They are often credited as the reason for why those styles are associated with the landmine stereotype to begin with. The members usually range between age 9-24, and are often privileged children who were convinced to run away from home by bad influences. They've been connected to underage prostitution, drug abuse, public self-harm, murder cases, theft, and many members have died or been hospitalized as a result. For more information on the Toyoko Kids, search the Japanese spelling on any major Japanese news site, or their signature hashtag on social media (#toho横界隈). Be aware that you'll also see clueless foreigners who think that they're just "jirai kei wearers" having fun. Below are more sources on Toyoko Kids. It's also important to note that the alleged reason for the popularity of the aforementioned styles within the group is their former leader "Howl", who died by apparent suicide on November 14, 2022, while waiting in custody for a trial. This man had yakuza ties and utilized the gang for criminal activities after taking control. Considering that he was facing child rape charges, it may not be surprising to know that he convinced minors to run away from home in order to "work" for him and dress in a way he finds attractive. This is the absolute origin of the "jirai kei aesthetic".

- [歌舞伎町“ト一横”暴行死事件、自殺に未成年売春「もう若者の傷を癒す場所ではない」週刊女性PRIME](#)

- [「血を舐めてもらって興奮した」「生理ナプキンで止血した跡が...」歌舞伎町“TOHO横”に集まる未成年は何をしているのか | 文春オンライン](#)
- [「カッターで自傷しろ」「慰謝料か切腹」「ハウル」が消えたトー横の治安が「北斗の拳」状態に 献花台には「次は地獄でカンパイ!」とも... | 文春オンライン](#)
- [「『居場所がない』という意味が私にはわからなくて」中学3年の娘がトー横キッズに...母親が困惑した“オーバードーズ事件”と「広場にいきたい」 | 文春オンライン](#)
- [日本 거리의 아이들 ‘투요코 키즈’와 지리계를 아십니까?](#)
- [The “Tohyoko 2nd Generation” has begun to gather in Kabukicho again, and its amazing characteristics | FRIDAY DIGITAL](#)
- [Who are Who Are トー横キッズ? | Japan According to Akil](#)



(note: this image is taken before the so-called “jirai kei boom”.)

“Well... it’s similar to larme kei, why not call it that?”

Larme is the name of a popular Japanese fashion magazine, but it’s not the name of a style on its own. Due to the language barrier, its slogan “sweet girly artbook” was mistaken for a descriptor instead of the magazine labeling itself as artbook dedicated to “sweet girly” - a girly kei substyle. Not knowing what to call the styles featured in Larme, the west decided to label them all as “larme kei” despite that this would just mean in Japanese that an outfit is straight up copied from Larme magazine. Due to the fact that Larme primarily posts the sweet, retro, and mature substyles, these are what the western community recognizes as “larme kei”. In reality, those are only a few girly kei substyles, most of which predate Larme. After all, girly kei fashion started to become a thing in the early 90s.

**A list and explanation of popular girly kei substyles has been posted.**

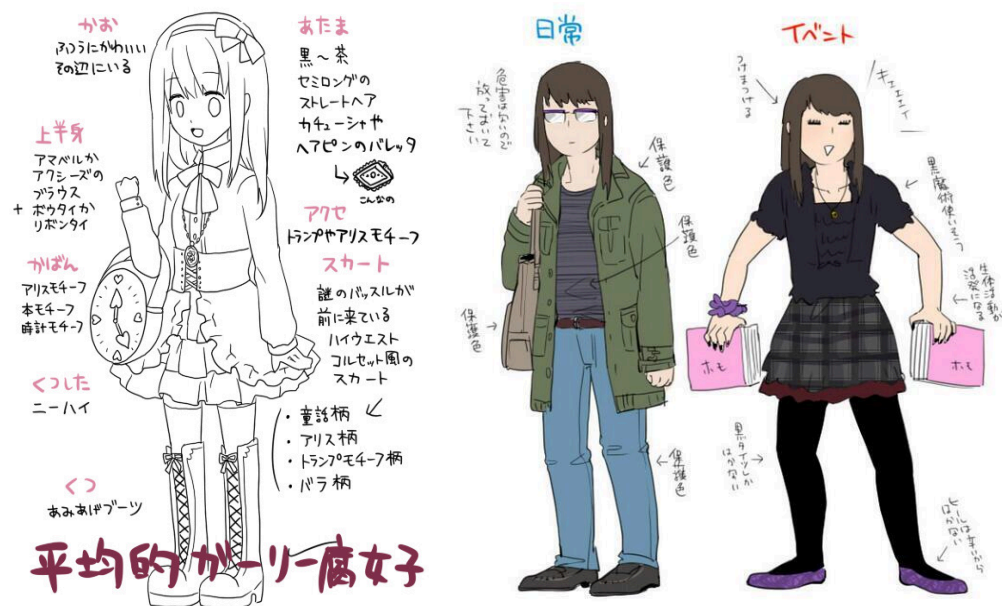


While Larme did a single feature on “jirai kei” at some point, they were pretty late on the trend and the outfits featured were almost indistinguishable from what was shown in previous issues of the magazine.

**Jirai kei isn't the only stereotype that's been associated with girly kei.  
(Please keep in mind that the style has also evolved some through the years, so not all  
examples will look the exact same.)**

# Girly Kei Fashion Stereotype Timeline

ガーリー腐女子  
(2013)



west, in Japan this term isn't all women who ship two men together, its women who are obsessed with yaoi, a "noncon" "porn without plot" genre that typically features m/m pairings) are often considered creepy and fetishistic. Otaku in Japan has a negative connotation, and is generally used to refer to people with obsessive nerdy interests and no sense of respect for the personal space or well-being of those around them (avoiding the connotation of being creepy and dangerous is why the term wota was created). The stereotype was popular enough that it landed in BL and yaoi manga and anime, like "Kiss Him, Not Me!".

## 清楚系ビッチ (2015)

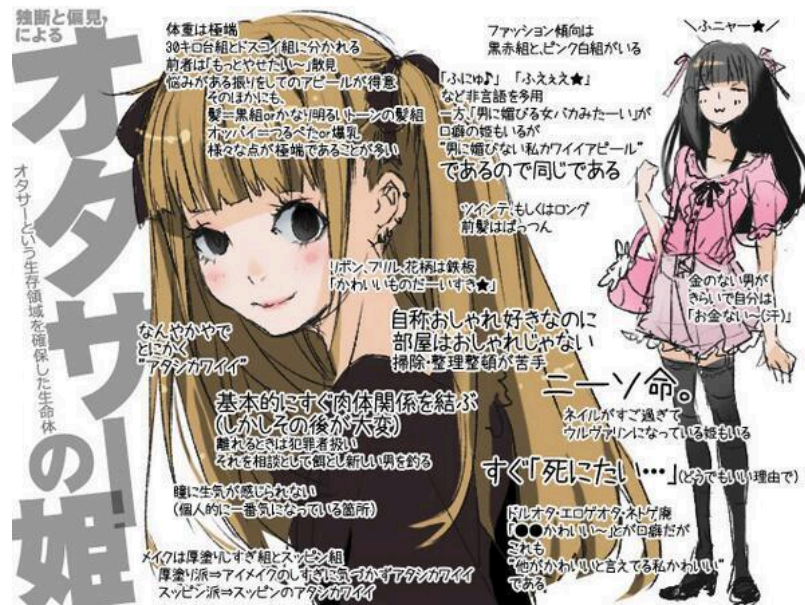


Around two years after that term hit its peak, a new stereotype took over- the "neat and clean bitch". It's important that in Japanese, "ビッチ" (katakana for english "bitch") is used to mean "whore". This type of girl wears pieces from expensive girly kei brands, pays special attention to her beauty and presentation, wears natural makeup, and makes sure to act cute, but is secretly a whore. This "clean bitch" will pretend to be soft spoken and feminine, but she's actually a maneater. Of course, its just another misogynist stereotype about girly kei fashion wearers. It's interesting to note that "clean type or bitch type" is trending amongst self-proclaimed landmines (among others) at the moment in the #清楚なのかビッチなのか tag on twitter.

- [清楚ビッチ \(せいそびっち\)とは【ピクシブ百科事典】](#)
- [清楚そうに見えるのに、じつは遊んでる!? 「清楚系ビッチ」の特徴6つ | 女子カアップCafe Googirl](#)
- [清楚に見えて実はビッチな女性を見分ける9つのポイント | ハウコレ](#)
- [#清楚なのかビッチなのか - Twitter Search / Twitter](#)



## オタサー姫 (2016)



While the “neat and clean type bitch” stereotype was still going strong, another emerged - and this time made it to the western community before people translated enough information on the stereotype to realize it was a stereotype and not a new type of fashion. Otasa hime is a mashup of otasa (オタサー) meaning “otaku circle”, the word for a school club dedicated to nerdy hobbies, and hime (姫) meaning princess. The stereotype refers to young girls who wear cheap girly brands mixed with whatever’s popular with otaku, like cat accessories, printed thigh highs, garters, and don’t put in the effort to do their makeup. Otasa hime, supposedly, crash otaku circles to be worshiped by their male members, threatening self-harm or suicide if they don’t get enough (note: around the same time, another stereotype known as himouto (干物系) was popular, and talked about girls with similar traits who were also lazy and wanted to be treated like a spoiled little princess, but the stereotype involved oversize clothing, which oddly enough is also popular now with self-described landmines).

- [オタサーの姫 \(おたさーのひめ\)とは【ピクシブ百科事典】](#)
- [まったくの別モノ!!「オタサーの姫」と「清楚系ビッチ」の違いとは？\(2017年5月14日\) | ウーマンエキサイト\(1/3\)](#)
- [オタサーの姫とは？オタサーの姫の特徴やモテる理由も！ - Popteen Media](#)
- ['Otasa Princess: Ecology in the Age of Overcrowded Otaku' Uncovers the Truth about Otaku Love! | Product News](#)

## 量産型/量産型ヲタ (2018)





Although the term ryouasangata technically just refers to everything mass-produced inside a factory, it's also been used to label someone as a “basic bitch” that follows popular trends and therefore looks like a clone next to others doing the same. As of ~2020, it has been associated with female wota (ヲタ) aka idol otaku who often dress in over-the-top girly kei fashion while attending concerts and events. The stereotype consists of mentally ill girls who have so little going in their life that they dedicate it and their whole income to their oshi (favorite male idol). Those hardcore fans are said to cut their wrists when their oshi is not doing well-enough in rankings as it's seen as own personal failure to not have spent enough money, throw lonely birthday parties (本人不在の誕生日会) celebrating their oshi while drowning their sorrow of still not getting noticed, despite spending so much money, in alcohol.

- [量产型 \(りょうさんがた\)とは【ピクシブ百科事典】](#)
- [今さら聞けない！『量产型』についてたっぷり解説しちゃいます👩💖 | Lafary\(ラファリー\)](#)
- [本人不在の誕生日会のススメ💖 量产型ヲタクさんの恒例行事をご紹介します🎂🍰 | Lafary\(ラファリー\)](#)
- [ガーリーな「量产型女子」は少数派？ 現役女子大生がトレンドの「本当の量产型ファッション」を語るツイートに注目集まる\(1/2 ページ\) - ねとらぽ](#)
- [Japanese girls, all look the same? - Ryouasangata Joshidaisei - | IroMegane](#)

地雷系  
(2020)



As the history of the term was already covered in extensive detail previously, let's get into the definition of jirai kei as of the dress-up challenge. Landmine girls are generally described as “cute but psycho” with a high degree of mental instability.

Historically at least, the popular image of the stereotype consists of terminally online girls who glorify self-harm, are binge drinking Strong Zero, have stalker tendencies, and are doing “papa katsu” (パパ活), a term for (generally underage or “barely legal”) prostitution to an older man, in order to afford their host club addiction. The pink MCM backpack, considered a status symbol for daddy activity girls, is often flaunted by self-proclaimed landmines, even in their cutting pictures. Landmines are known to host public group cutting circles in Kabukicho, slit their wrists outside of idol and visual kei concerts, rent Sanrio-themed rooms to post self-harm or even commit suicide in, etc. During the “landmine boom”, a host club even did an event for the “full jirai kei experience”, complete with a 1000 yen class teaching you how to “wrist cut cutely”.

- [地雷系 \(じらいけい\)とは【ピクシブ百科事典】](#)
- [【閲覧注意】道端で女性が集団リスカをし大騒ぎに！！ どうしてこんなことを・・・ | いいね！ ニューズ](#)
- [自傷行為すらもファッション感覚？ 現役女子大生ライターが追う「ぴえん系女子」の生態 | 日刊SPA!](#)
- [ホストデーのお知らせ - 東京・新宿の女装メイク サロン・photo studio RAAR\(ルール\)](#)
- [ashleyinjapan: “one of my most controversial videos but I was in SHOCK that the police weren't doing anything to help them #japanstudyabroad #studyabroadtokyo #redlightdistrict #kabukicho”](#)



It's probably a good idea to look a little further into the landmine girl stereotype beyond the current association with girly kei fashion. Most landmines seem to idolize Takahashi Yua from manga series (and recently live action drama) Tomorrow I Will Be Someone's Girlfriend, the most popular girly kei wearing fictional landmine. Yua's character consists of doing underage prostitution so she can afford to visit host clubs, cutting herself out of shame afterwards, posting self-harm pics to social media, binge drinking, attacking hosts who aren't her oshi, and coordinating her outfits to show off her fresh cuts. The self-described landmine admiration for this character has even spread to the west recently, as more western landmines are becoming honest about the true meaning of the term. Yua is pretty much peak jirai kei. However, the author of the work stated in multiple interviews that people are missing its point by idolizing any of the main characters.

- [明日カノ「ゆあてや」になりたい♡地雷女子コーデ！推ししか勝たん♡ - HARAJUKU POP WEB](#)
- [パパ活、整形、ホス狂い—— “夜の街”が熱狂する漫画「明日カノ」作者×オタクホスト「阿散井恋次」対談 - ねとらぼ](#)

Recently, there has been an influx of foreigners coming across the term being unaware of its actual use and meaning within Japan, some even trying to interpret a deep "reclaiming" feminist background into it. Some of them even assert that it's "being open about mental health" - which doesn't happen in Japan (outside of some menhera subculture members), as mental illness is seen as a personality flaw and not an illness by most people who aren't psychologists. Due to the misconception, Japanese netizens into girly kei fashion have had their images taken and reposted under a term that is not only used to label someone as "ticking time bomb", but also full of the glorification of self-harm. This has resulted in multiple instances of people locking and sometimes even deleting their accounts over the harmful association with the term by strangers.

## ぴえん系 (2021)



With the similarities between the ryouasangata and jirai kei stereotypes, and the fact that those who called themselves one often put the other in their bio for extra clicks as well, they began to congeal into a new stereotype that blended the two together. In the last few years, the emoji often referred to as the pleading emoji in the west, became so widespread in its use that the Japanese name for it - ぴえん (read “pien”, to imitate the sound of sobbing), became the most popular new slang term for a time in surveys and rankings. Due to its frequent use by perceived and self-described landmine and mass-produced girls, this new crossbreed stereotype was dubbed ぴえん系 (the “pien” type). They’re generally seen as slightly less dangerous than the landmine types, as they’re more likely to threaten to harm themselves than others, whereas landmine types are known for both. They’re also known for posting sob-stories online for attention, as well as doing AV (adult video). And yes, they’re also supposedly big fans of girly kei fashion. (note: most of the sites below are using menhera in the derogatory manner.)

- [ぴえん系女子って？外見の特徴から生態まで徹底解説！ | MTRL \(マテリアル\)](#)
- [「ぴえん系女子」、「地雷系女子」、「量産型女子」は何が違う？ 元ホス狂の女子大生が語る、歌舞伎町・Z世代のリアル | 文春オンライン](#)
- [新宿女子とのトークテーマ、授けます。ぴえん系はなにが好き？ “すきび”って誰？ | Smartlog](#)



You might think that the current associations going viral has been killing off girly kei fashion - but you'd be wrong! Girly kei is still going strong, and many brands that rode on the stereotype terms for increased sales are going back to using the proper names of the various styles. Even during the height of the buzzwords, most brands still kept girly kei in their metatags (just try searching for brand name + ガーリー on Google). In the shop staff coordinate sections of the various girly brands, such as Ank Rouge, Jamie, EATME, and MA\*RS, you will find many jirai-esque outfits tagged as dark girly. While dark girly is still one of the more popular substyles, a new girly kei trend has been emerging recently, dubbed french girly (フレンチガーリー). It seems girly kei won't die anytime soon.



- [秋冬の新作『DarkGirly』がサンキューマートオリジナル雑貨シリーズより新登場！](#)
- [VTuber「にじさんじ」をイメージしたガーリーコレクション登場 | MOSHI MOSHI NIPPON | もしもしにっぽん](#)
- [【French girly】今年もやっぱり甘くてかわいい“フレンチガーリー”に決まり♥ - レディースファッション通販の夢展望【公式】](#)

This blog has since posted many more articles discussing both girly kei fashion and jirai kei culture, which can be found under #articles. There's also frequent postings of Youtube videos by Japanese girly kei wearers and other current instances of the terms proper usage. I also write about updates on girly kei brands and trends, as well as post sourced coord and aesthetic inspo. I also write about other linguistic misconceptions when it comes to j-fashion, and explain associations with jirai kei that aren't related to fashion.

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This article was a collaboration between Ribon-tan of girly-kei-tips and two others who wish to remain anonymous due to the amount of online harassment that surrounds the issue. Please direct all questions to Ribon-tan.